AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims to be as follows.

1.   (currently amended)   A method for image processing, the method comprising:

applying a point-based threshold function to identify candidate edge chains in an image being processed;

determining a dynamic chain-based threshold function that is dependent on ~~at least one characteristic~~ a global characteristic of the image being processed;

applying the dynamic chain-based threshold function to <u>selectively filter</u> the candidate edge chains; and

removing from a set of edge chains those candidate edge chains that fail to pass the dynamic chain-based threshold function<u>,</u>

<u>wherein the global characteristic comprises a global measure of color variation that is calculated over an image.</u>

2.   (canceled)

3.   (canceled)

4.   (canceled)

5.   (currently amended)   The method of ~~claim 4~~ <u>claim 1</u>, wherein the global measure comprises a mean measure of the color variation.

6.   (currently amended)   The method of ~~claim 4~~ <u>claim 1</u>, wherein the global measure comprises a median measure of the color variation.

7.   (currently amended)   The method of ~~claim 4~~ <u>claim 1</u>, wherein the global measure is calculated over the candidate edge chains within the image.

8.   (currently amended)   The method of ~~claim 2~~ <u>claim 1</u>, wherein the dynamic chain-based threshold function comprises a linear function of the global characteristic.

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9.   (currently amended)   An apparatus for image processing, the apparatus comprising:

a candidate edge chain identifier for identifying candidate edge chains in an image being processed;

means for determining a dynamic chain-based threshold function that is dependent on ~~at least one characteristic~~ a global characteristic of the image being processed; and

a threshold applicator for applying the dynamic chain-based threshold function to selectively filter the candidate edge chains,

wherein the global characteristic comprises a global measure of color variation that is calculated over an image.

10.   (canceled)

11.   (canceled)

12.   (currently amended)   The apparatus of ~~claim 11~~ claim 9, wherein the global measure comprises a mean measure of the color variation.

13.   (currently amended)   The apparatus of ~~claim 11~~ claim 9, wherein the global measure comprises a median measure of the color variation.

14.   (currently amended)   The apparatus of ~~claim 11~~ claim 9, wherein the global measure is calculated over the candidate edge chains within the image.

15.   (currently amended)   The apparatus of ~~claim 10~~ claim 9, wherein the dynamic chain-based threshold function comprises a linear function of the global characteristic.

16.   (original)   The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the apparatus comprises a video encoder.

17.   (original)   The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the video encoder is configured to operate cooperatively with a video decoder, and wherein the video decoder also comprises the edge identifier, the means for determining, and the thresholder.

18.   (original)   The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the apparatus comprises a video decoder.

19.   (currently amended)   A method for processing an image, the method comprises:

determining a dynamic chain-based threshold function that is dependent on ~~at least one global characteristic~~ a global measure of color variation of the image being processed; and

applying the dynamic chain-based threshold function to a candidate edge chain.

20.   (currently amended)   A system for image processing, the system comprising:

an encoder that includes a candidate edge chain identifier for identifying candidate edge chains in an image being processed, means for calculating a dynamic chain-based threshold function that is dependent on at least one global characteristic of the image being processed, and a threshold applicator for applying the dynamic chain-based threshold function to the candidate edge chains; and

a decoder configured to operate in cooperation with the encoder, wherein the decoder also includes the candidate edge chain identifier, the means for calculating, and the threshold applicator.